

**SAD END TO 22 YEARS SERVICE IN THE ROYAL NAVY**

Denis Driscoll was born on the 12<sup>th</sup> March, 1876 at Kilbriain, County Cork, Ireland. At the age of 20 years, he joined the Royal Navy at Portsmouth on the 4<sup>th</sup> August, 1896 for a twelve year engagement. He was described as being 5ft 4½-inches in height, with dark hair, light blue eyes, a ruddy complexion, had no distinguishing marks and gave his occupation as that of a Farm Labourer. On the 4<sup>th</sup> August, 1908 he agreed to complete his service for pension, had grown one inch and his complexion was described as fresh. His record of service was as follows:

<u>Ship</u>	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Period Of Service</u>		<u>Character</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
		<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>		
Vivid II	Stoker 2 <sup>nd</sup> Class	4 Aug 1896			
Vivid II	Stoker	26 Aug 1897	8 Nov 1897		
Sirius	Stoker	9 Nov 1897	10 Jan 1898		
Vivid II	Stoker	11 Nov 1898	18 Sep 1900		
Howe	Stoker	19 Sep 1900	13 Oct 1900		
Vivid II	Stoker	14 Oct 1900	22 Oct 1900		
Hussar	Stoker	23 Oct 1900	14 Nov 1900		
Jason	Stoker	15 Nov 1900	23 Nov 1900		
Howe	Stoker	24 Nov 1900	29 Jan 1901		DS2
Vivid II	Stoker	22 Jun 1901	4 May 1902		
Duke of Wellington	Stoker	5 May 1902	4 Jun 1902		
Ariadne	Stoker	5 Jun 1902	? Mar 1904		Cells
Ariadne	Stoker	21 Mar 1904	17 Jul 1905		
Royal Arthur	Stoker	18 Jul 1905	25 Feb 1906		Cells 7 Days
Royal Arthur	Stoker	5 Mar 1906	14 May 1906		
Vivid II	Stoker	15 May 1906	5 Jun 1906		

Victory II	Stoker	9 June 1906	
Victory II	Stoker 1 <sup>st</sup> Class	1 Jul 1906	9 Oct 1906
Mercury	Stoker 1 <sup>st</sup> Class	10 Oct 1906	3 Dec 1908
Victory II	Stoker 1 <sup>st</sup> Class	4 Dec 1908	25 Apl 1909
Amethyst	Stoker 1 <sup>st</sup> Class	26 Apl	
Amethyst	Leading Stoker	5 May 1909	30 Sep 1911
Victory II	Leading Stoker	1 Oct 1911	9 Nov 1911
Medina	Leading Stoker	10 Nov 1911	15 Feb 1912
Victory II	Leading Stoker	16 Feb 1912	6 Mar 1912
Hecla	Leading Stoker	7 Mar 1912	30 Apl 1912
Topaze II	Leading Stoker	1 May 1912	31 Jul 1912
Minerva II	Leading Stoker	1 Aug 1912	28 Aug 1913
Dido II	Leading Stoker	29 Aug 1913	9 Dec 1914
Victory II	Leading Stoker	10 Dec 1913	14 Jan 1914
Doris	Leading Stoker	15 Jan 1914	12 Mar 1914
Bramble	Leading Stoker	13 Mar 1914	5 Aug 1914
Triumph	Leading Stoker	6 Aug 1914	1 Jun 1915
Victory II	Leading Stoker	2 Jun 1915	7 Aug 1918
Venerable	Leading Stoker	8 Aug 1918	31 Mar 1919
Research	Leading Stoker	1 Apl 1919	3 May 1919

D.D.

Denis Driscoll's character was marked on his service record as 'Very Good'. He was awarded his first Good Conduct Badge on the 4<sup>th</sup> August, 1899, but was deprived of it on the 7<sup>th</sup> March, 1904. Restored to him on the 21<sup>st</sup> May, 1905 he again was deprived of it on the 26<sup>th</sup> February, 1906 and restored to him on the 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1907. His second Good Conduct Badge was awarded on the 1<sup>st</sup> March, 1909 and the third on the 1<sup>st</sup> March, 1911. It appears from his service record

that Denis Driscoll experienced disciplinary problems between March 1904 and February 1906. Perhaps this reflects the temporary loss of his Good Conduct Badges. Whatever problems he experienced for the remainder of his naval career, it was an unblemished one. In the remarks column between the 29<sup>th</sup> January, 1901 and the 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1901 is a naval acronym 'DS2'. During this period Denis was discharged to Sick Quarters. There is no indication given as to the reason. The '2' is a copperplate capital letter for the letter 'Q'.

During his naval career Denis served on numerous late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century warships of the Royal Navy. A brief description and history of those warships is set out below.

### HMS Vivid II

HMS Vivid was designated by the Royal Navy as a barracks at Devonport and for other nominal bases in the United Kingdom. Established in 1890, it operated as a training unit until 1914. The base was renamed HMS Drake in 1934. HMS Vivid I was the Seamanship, Signalling and Telegraphy School in Devonport and HMS Vivid II was the Stokers and Engine Room Artificers School in Devonport. Under section 87 of the Naval Discipline Act, 1886, the provision of the act applied to officers and men of the Royal Navy borne on the books of a warship. When shore establishments began to become more common it was necessary to allocate the title of the establishment to an actual vessel which became the nominal depot ship for the men allocated to the establishment and thus ensured they were subject to the provisions of the Act.

### HMS Sirius

HMS Sirius, an Apollo-class armoured cruiser, one of twenty-one warships of this class was laid down at Armstrong, Mitchell & Company Shipyard at Elswick, Newcastle-upon-Tyne in September 1889 and commissioned three years later. They were ordered under the terms of The Naval Defence Act of 1889. HMS Sirius displaced 3,600-tons and was one of eleven ships sheathed in wood and copper to reduce fouling. Powered by two triple expansion steam engines producing 7,000 IHP natural draught (19-knots) and 9,000 IHP forced draught (23-knots). Her main armament were 2 x QF 6-inch Guns, 6 x QF 4.7-inch Guns and 4 x 14-inch Torpedoes. Initially assigned to the American and China stations she was placed in reserve at Devonport in 1905. In 1912 she became a training ship and during the First World War was one of a number of obsolete warships deployed to support Belgian troops during the Battle of the Yser (16<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> October, 1914). Transferred to the Nore Command until March 1915 she was used as a guardship on the East coast on the United Kingdom and later served on the West Africa station until 1918. In April of that year HMS Sirius was deliberately scuttled in an attempt to block the entrance of Ostend harbour during the failed First Ostend Raid.

### HMS Howe

HMS Howe was an Admiral-class ironclad battleship laid down at Pembroke Dockyard in June 1882 and commissioned in July 1889. She displaced 10,300-tons and was powered by two Humphreys compound expansion steam engines producing 7,500 IHP (natural draught), 16-knots and 11,500 IHP (forced draught), 17-knots. Her main armament was comprised of 2 x Twin 13.5-inch Guns, 6 x Single 6-inch Guns, 12 x Single 6-Pounder Hotchkiss Guns, 10 x Single 3-Pounder Hotchkiss Guns, and 5 x 14-inch Torpedo Tubes. She was armoured as follows: Waterline Belt 18-inch to 8-inch, Bulkheads 16-inch to 7-inch, Barbettes 11.5-inch to 10-inch, Conning Tower 12-inch to 2-inch and Deck 3-inch to 2.5-inch. Assigned to the Channel Squadron she ran aground off Ferrol, Spain in November 1892 and was salvaged in March 1893. Repaired and refitted at Chatham she joined the Mediterranean Fleet and served there for three years. From December 1896 she became the guardship at Queenstown. Paid off at Devonport in October 1901 she was placed in reserve and decommissioned in 1904. HMS Howe was sold for £25,000 in October 1910 and broken up two years later.

### HMS Hussar

HMS Hussar was a Dryad-class torpedo boat laid down at Devonport Dockyard in April 1893 and commissioned in December 1896. She displaced 1,070-tons and was powered by locomotive boilers supplying steam to two 3-cylinder triple expansion engines, producing 3,500 IHP and a speed on 18-knots. Her armament consisted of 1 x QF 4.7-inch Gun, 2 x 12-Pounder Guns, 1 x 6-Pounder Gun and 5 x 18-inch Torpedo Tubes. HMS Hussar served on the Mediterranean Station between 1896 and 1905. In 1907 in preparation for conversion into a yacht and despatch vessel for the Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean her armament was removed. During 1914 she was converted, as were many torpedo boats into a minesweeper. In February 1915, under the command of Commander Edward Unwin she was sent to the Dardanelles. For the landing at Cape Helles on the 25<sup>th</sup> April, 1915 Unwin commanded the Steam Ship River Clyde for the landing at Cape Helles. He and two crew members of HMS Hussar, Able Seaman William Williams and Seaman George Samson were awarded the Victoria Cross for their gallantry during the landings. HMS Hussar was sold in 1920 and scrapped the following year.

### HMS Jason

HMS Jason was an Alarm-class torpedo gunboat built by the Naval Construction & Engineering Company at Barrow-in-Furness. Laid down in September 1891, she was launched the following year and completed in June 1893. HMS Jason displaced 810-tons and was powered by two triple

steam expansion engines, achieving a speed of 18½-knots. Her armament comprised 2 x 4.7-inch QF Guns, 4 x 3-Pounder Guns, 1 x Gardiner Machine Gun and 3 x 18-inch Torpedo Tubes. HMS Jason was employed on home service duties and participated in annual naval manoeuvres. In 1902 new engines and water tube boilers were installed enabling her to achieve a speed of 22-knots. Placed in reserve at Chatham in 1906 she joined the Home Fleet the following year. She was converted to a minesweeper in 1909 after a refit and joined the Nore Division of the Home Fleet in 1912. During the First World War she was attached with other minesweepers to the Grand Fleet employed on daily mine sweeping duties of the Pentland Firth. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 1917 HMS Jason struck a mine off Coll in the Inner Hebrides and sank with a loss of thirty of her crew.

### HMS Duke of Wellington

HMS Duke of Wellington was a 131-gun first rate ship of the line built at Pembroke Dockyard in 1852 during a period of technological developments in the Royal Navy when ships were being powered by sail and steam. Whilst HMS Duke of Wellington was under construction her design was modified and a 780 HP steam engine and a screw propeller were installed. She was launched as HMS Windsor Castle on the 14<sup>th</sup> September, 1852, the day that the Duke of Wellington died and she was renamed in his honour. Initially designed with a displacement of 5,892-tons the addition of her machinery, added a further 270-tons to her displacement. Under sail and with steam power she was able to achieve a speed of just over 10-knots. HMS Duke of Wellington served with the Western Squadron of Channel Fleet and in the Baltic Campaign of 1854 but did not participate in the Crimean War. Paid off in 1856 she became guardship at Devonport from 1860 to 1863 and then a receiving ship at Portsmouth. She replaced HMS Victory as flagship of the Port Admiral at Portsmouth from 1869 to 1891. Although she had been paid off in 1888 she continued to be a receiving ship at Portsmouth until 1903 when the personnel stationed on her moved ashore into the Royal Naval Barracks. A year later HMS Duke of Wellington was sold and broken up.

### HMS Ariadne

HMS Ariadne was one of six Diadem-class armoured protected cruisers laid down in October 1896 at J & G Thompson's Clydebank Shipyard and completed four years later. She displaced 11,000-tons and was powered by thirty Belleville coal-fired boilers supplying steam to two 4-cylinder triple expansion engines, with a designed HP of 16,500 and achieving a speed of 20-knots. Her armament comprised 16 x 6-inch 40 Calibre Guns, 12 x 12-Pounder Guns (12-cwt), 1 x 12-Pounder Guns (8-cwt), 3 x 3-Pounder Guns and 2 x 18-inch Torpedo Tubes (Submerged).

Commissioned at Portsmouth in June 1902 she was assigned to the North American and West Indies Station. In 1913 HMS Ariadne was converted to a stoker's training ship and four years later to a minelayer. On the 26<sup>th</sup> July, 1917 she was torpedoed and sunk off Beachy Head by the German submarine UC-65 commanded by Kapitänleutnant Otto Steinbrinck (1888-1949).

### HMS Royal Arthur

HMS Royal Arthur, an Edgar-class first cruiser originally named Centaur but was renamed in 1890 prior to launching. She was laid down at Portsmouth Dockyard in January 1890 and launched to following year. Displacing 7,700-tons, HMS Royal Arthur was steam powered and coal-fired with a designed HP of 12,000 producing a speed of 19½-knots. Her armament comprised 1 x 9.2-inch 30 Calibre Gun, 12 x 6-Pounder Guns, 5 x 3-Pounder Guns and 2 x 18-inch Submerged Torpedo Tubes. HMS Royal Arthur served as the flagship of the Pacific Station from 1892 to 1896 and after a refit flagship of the Australian Station from 1897 to 1904. After leaving the Australian Station she returned to the United Kingdom she was paid off and refitted. Re-commissioned in 1905 she served on the North America and West Indies Station for a year and returned to the United Kingdom and laid up in reserve for three years. Taken out of reserve she was assigned to the Home Fleet and later to the Queenstown Training Squadron. During the early part of the First World War she was guardship at Scapa Flow and later used as submarine depot ship. In 1920 HMS Royal Arthur was paid off and sold for scrapping.

### HMS Victory II

HMS Victory II was a land based establishment for stokers and engine room artificers based at Portsmouth. In 1915 it was transferred to Crystal Palace as a training depot for the Royal Naval Division. At the end of the First World War it was relocated back to Portsmouth.

### HMS Mercury

HMS Mercury, an Iris-class despatch vessel of 3,730-tons displacement, later modified as a second-class cruiser was laid down at Pembroke Dockyard in March 1876 and completed in 1879. Originally barque-rigged for sail these were removed and she became one of the first 'mastless cruisers' in the Royal Navy. The removal of her sailing rig provided a large space for machinery and auxiliary equipment and was re-armed on three occasions. HMS Mercury was assigned to the Portsmouth reserve between 1879 and 1890 and then to the China Station until 1895. On return to the United Kingdom she was placed in reserve at Portsmouth until 1903 and then became a navigation school ship for navigating officers for two years. From 1906 to 1913 she was used as a submarine depot ship at Portsmouth and at Harwich. In 1914 HMS Mercury

was hulked as the port depot ship at Rosyth. She was moved to Chatham in January 1918 and became an accommodation ship. Paid off in March 1919 she was sold and scrapped four months later.

### HMS Amethyst

HMS Amethyst was a third-class armoured protected cruiser of the Topaze-class laid down at Armstrong Whitworth & Company's Shipyard at Elswick, Newcastle-upon-Tyne in January 1903 and completed two years later. Displacing 3,000-tons she was propelled by Parsons steam turbines driving three shafts. With an installed power of 12,000 HP she was able to achieve a speed of 22½-knots. Her main armament was 12 x QF 4-inch Guns, 8 x 3-Pounder Guns, and 2 x 18-inch Torpedo Tubes. On the outbreak of the First World War HMS Amethyst was assigned to the Harwich Force and participated in the Battle of Heligoland on the 28<sup>th</sup> August, 1914 and later transferred to the 1<sup>st</sup> Light Cruiser Squadron. She was sent to the Dardanelles in 1915 and in March was supporting minesweeping operations during which she exchanged fire with the Turkish forts. In the early morning hours of the 14<sup>th</sup> March, she was struck by Turkish shell-fire which killed 22 men and wounding 38 of whom four died.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> April, 1915 she embarked soldiers who were landed by trawler at Y Beach, and afterwards continued to support troops off Y, W and Z Beaches. In May a rating was killed and four wounded by Turkish gunfire. During June and July 1915 she was employed on patrolling duties from Brindisi, a city in the region of Apulia in southern Italy and capital of the Province of Brindisi on the coast of the Adriatic Sea. After a refit she returned to Brindisi in September and was present there when the Italian battleship Benedetto Brin exploded in the outer harbour and assisted in rescuing survivors. During the autumn of 1915 she remained in port as a temporary depot ship for submarines. In December she left the Mediterranean and returned to the United Kingdom and was moored at Barrow-in-Furness until March 1916 and was then assigned to the South America Station. After returning the Devonport in May 1918 she was dry docked at Barrow-in-Furness. Re-commissioned in November 1918 she was sent to the Mediterranean and was paid off at Malta and sold the following year for scrapping.

### HMS Medina

The S.S. Medina, a passenger liner, was built in 1911 by J. Caird & Company of Greenock for the Peninsula & Oriental Steam Navigation Company. Displacing 12,358-tons, she was 550-ft in length, had a beam of 62·8-ft, and a draught of 34½-ft. Powered by two quadruple-expansion steam engines with a designed IHP of 1,164 she was capable of achieving a speed of 19-knots.

After her completion the Medina was commissioned into the Royal Navy and conveyed King George V and Queen Mary to India for the Coronation Durbar.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> April, 1917 she left Plymouth for London on the last part of her voyage from India. During the evening, having reached a position East-North-East of Start Point she was torpedoed in the starboard engine room by the German submarine UB 31, commanded by Oberleutnant zur See Thomas Bieber (1890-1918). The engines were stopped and she began to sink. Wireless distress calls were sent out and the passengers and crew took to the lifeboats. At 1915 hours, forty-five minutes after being struck the vessel sank. The fourth engineer and five firemen were killed by the explosion. The lifeboats were taken in tow by destroyers and motor launches to Dartmouth and Brixham where the survivors were landed.

### HMS Hecla

Originally built by Harland & Wolff for a private shipping company she was purchased by the Admiralty before her completion for use as a depot ship. Launched in June 1878 it was proposed to refit HMS Hecla at Portsmouth for an armed troopship. However, the proposal was shelved as during sea trials it became apparent that her sea keeping qualities were poor as she shipped so much sea water which swept over her stern and flooded cabins and damaging deck structures. In 1883 due to a series of serious mechanical defects she was unable to cruise with the Channel Squadron and underwent repairs at Portsmouth. Assigned to the Reserve Fleet HMS Hecla participated in the Annual Naval Manoeuvres of 1890. She served with the Fourth Destroyer Flotilla at Scapa Flow from 1914 to 1916 and then supported the Second Destroyer Flotilla from Belfast between 1917 and 1918. Re-commissioned in October 1919 at Chatham HMS Hecla was later sold and scrapped in 1926.

### HMS Topaze II

HMS Topaze was the first of four Third-class armoured protected cruisers of the Gem-class. Four additional ships of this class were cancelled before their keels were laid and they were the last armoured protected cruisers constructed for the Royal Navy. HMS Topaze was built in 1903 by Laird Brothers of Birkenhead. The shipbuilding company merged in the same year with Johnson Cammell & Company to form the Cammell Laird Shipbuilding Company. HMS Topaze displaced 3,000-tons and was powered by two 4-cylinder triple expansion steam engines each driving one shaft with steam supplied by ten water-tube boilers. The engines were designed to produce a total IHP of 9,800 and a speed of 22-knots. Her armament comprised 12 x QF 4-inch Guns, 1 x 6-Pounder AA Gun, 2 x 3-Pounder AA Guns, 1 x 6-Pounder Gun and 3 x Machine Guns. She carried a maximum of 710-tons of coal which gave her a range of 7,000 nautical

miles at 10-knots. Her building costs were £242,444. She was assigned to the Channel Fleet and in late 1913 to the Third Fleet. During the early months of the First World War she was attached to the 5<sup>th</sup> Battle Squadron and then served in the Mediterranean between 1915 and 1917. Later that year HMS Topaze was transferred to the East Indies Fleet which included duties in the Red Sea. She was paid off in 1919 and sold in September 1921.

### HMS Minerva

HMS Minerva was an Eclipse-class armoured protected cruiser built at Chatham Dockyard. She was laid down in December 1893 and completed in February 1897. Displacing 5,600-tons she was propelled by two inverted triple expansion steam engines supplied with steam from eight cylindrical boilers producing an IHP of 9,600 and a speed of 18½-knots. As built her armament was comprised of 5 x QF 6-inch Guns, 6 x 4-7-inch Guns 6 x 3-Pounder Guns and 3 x 18-inch Torpedo Tubes. In 1905 her armament was modified and upgraded to 11 x 6-inch QF Guns, 9 x 3-inch QF Guns and 7 x 3-Pounder Guns. Assigned to the Channel Squadron and then to a Training Squadron she also acted as a Guardship at Cowes. During the Spring of 1902 she was used for a series of sea trials to compare her cylindrical boilers with the Belleville boilers of HMS Hyacinth in the English Channel and the Mediterranean. The results of these trials led to the phasing out of Bellville boilers in warships for Royal Navy.

In December 1908 she participated in the relief operations in Sicily after a severe earthquake and tsunami in the Straits of Messina caused widespread damage. She returned from duties in the Mediterranean to the United Kingdom in 1912 and helped in the rescue attempts when HM Submarine B2 was sunk in a collision in October of that year. On the outbreak of the First World War HMS Minerva was serving with the 11<sup>th</sup> Cruiser Squadron based in Ireland and then detached in September to the 5<sup>th</sup> Cruiser Squadron to intercept enemy merchant ships. She escorted a troop convoy to Egypt in November 1914 and then was ordered to support the naval forces in the Dardanelles and Gallipoli campaign in 1915. The following year she was deployed to the China Station and then to the Indian Ocean and Red Sea in 1917. Remaining on the East Africa Station until the end of the war, HMS Minerva returned to Queenstown in 1920 and scrapped a few months later.

### HMS Dido

HMS Dido was an Eclipse-class armoured protected cruiser built by the London & Glasgow Shipbuilding Company at Govan. She was laid down in August 1894 and completed in May 1898. Displacing 5,600-tons, HMS Dido was powered by two inverted triple expansion steam engines each driving one shaft and supplied with steam from eight cylindrical boilers. The

engines were designed to produce 8,000 IHP (natural draught), giving a speed of 18½-knots and 9,600 IHP (forced draught) which gave an increase in speed of 1-knot. Her armament comprised 9 x 6-inch 45 Calibre Mk VII Guns, 4 x 12-Pounder (12-cwt), 1 x 3-Pounder, 2 x Machine Guns, 3 x 18-inch Torpedo Tubes (2 Submerged). On the day of her launching, 18<sup>th</sup> March 1896 she stuck fast to the slipway. Two days later she was successfully launched. HMS Dido was assigned to the China Station in 1900 and returned to Chatham in 1902 and placed in reserve. She was reclassified in 1912 and depot ship and was sold and scrapped in 1921.

### HMS Doris

HMS Doris an Eclipse-class armoured protected cruiser was built by the Naval Construction & Armaments Company at Barrow-in-Furness. She was laid down in August 1894 and completed in November 1897. Displacing 5,600-tons, HMS Doris was powered by two inverted triple expansion steam engines each driving one shaft, supplied with steam from eight coal-fired cylindrical boilers. The engines were designed to produce 8,000 IHP and a speed of 18½-knots. Her original armament consisted of 5 x QF 6-inch Guns, 6 x QF 4·7-inch Guns; 6 x 3-Pounder Guns and 3 x 18-inch Torpedoes. In 1905 her armament was upgraded to 11 x QF 6-inch Guns, 9 x 12-Pounder QF Guns and 7 x 3-Pounder QF Guns. From 1898 to 1900 she was flagship of the Cape of Good Hope Station. One of her 4·7-inch QF Guns was mounted on an improvised field gun carriage and used during the Boer War 1899-1900. The gun was known as 'Joe Chamberlain'. HMS Doris returned to the United Kingdom and was paid off at Devonport in May 1901. Refitted and re-commissioned in June 1902 she was assigned to the Channel Squadron and later to the Atlantic Fleet. On the outbreak of the First World War she was serving with the 11<sup>th</sup> Cruiser Squadron of the Home Fleet. On the 5<sup>th</sup> August, 1914 she captured a German merchant ship. In November she was sent to Egypt to form part of the allied force opposing Turkey. Her duties included patrolling the Syrian coast searching for enemy ships and shore installations. She remained in the Eastern Mediterranean until March 1915 supporting landing operations and bombarding enemy coastal positions until relieved by the French. On the 25<sup>th</sup> April, 1915 she participated in the shore bombardment near Bulair as part of the diversionary operations for the main landing of troops at Cape Helles. From March 1917 until November 1918 HMS Doris was stationed in India where she served as a hulk and was sold and scrapped in February 1919.

### HMS Bramble

HMS Bramble was of four Bramble-class gunboats built at Liverpool by W.H. Potter & Sons in 1898. She was designed with two masts, rigged for sail to supplement her steam engine.

Displacing 710-tons, HMS Bramble was 180-ft in length, had a beam of 33-ft and a draught of 8-ft. Her steam engine was designed to produce 1,300 IHP and a speed of 13½-knots. The vessels of this class with small dimensions and a shallow draught were constructed for work along the coastlines and rivers of Africa, South Asia and the Far East. Her coal capacity was only sufficient for one week's cruising. HMS Bramble was armed with 2 x QF 4-inch Guns, 4 x 12-Pounder Gun and 4 x 0.45-inch Maxim Guns. She was assigned to the China Station in June 1900 where she remained for most of her seagoing career. In 1915 she moved to the Indian Ocean for deployment in the Persian Gulf supporting the Mesopotamian Campaign, with planned refits undertaken at Bombay. HMS Bramble was paid off in October 1919 and scrapped the following year.

### HMS Triumph

HMS Triumph was one of two Swiftsure-class pre-dreadnought battleships ordered by the Chilean Government. In 1903, however she was purchased by the Admiralty. Originally named Libertad, HMS Triumph was laid down in 1902 at Vickers, Sons & Maxim at Barrow-in-Furness and completed at a cost of £957,520 in June 1904. Displacing 12,175-tons she was powered by two 4-cylinder vertical triple expansion steam engines each driving one shaft and supplied by steam from twelve coal-fired Yarrow water-tube boilers. The engines were designed to produce 12,500 IHP and a speed of 19-knots. Her armament comprised 2 x Twin BL 10-inch Mk VII Guns, 14 x Single BL 7.5-inch Guns, 14 x QF 14-Pounder Mk II Guns, 4 x QF 6-Pounder Guns and 2 x 17.7-inch Torpedo Tubes.

She was commissioned at Chatham in September 1904 for service with the Home Fleet and under the 1905 reorganisation of the Royal Navy the Home Fleet became the Channel Fleet. Transferred in 1909 to the Mediterranean Fleet for three years she returned to the United Kingdom and rejoined the Channel Fleet. In August 1913 she was assigned to the China Station and placed in reserve at Hong Kong until mobilisation in August 1914. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> August, 1914 she was attached to the Imperial Japanese Navy's Second Fleet and participated in operations against the German Colony at Tsingtao. In September in company with HMS Usk they escorted a convoy carrying British troops for the assault and capture of Tsingtao. HMS Triumph bombarded German positions until Tsingtao was captured by the Japanese on the 7<sup>th</sup> November. During the bombardment on the 14<sup>th</sup> October she was struck by a German shell, which killed one crewman and wounding two others. She returned to Hong Kong on the 19<sup>th</sup> November, 1914 for a refit. On completion of her refit in January 1915 HMS Triumph was transferred to the Dardanelles for service in the Dardanelles Campaign. She took part in the bombardment of the

Turkish forts at the entrance to the Dardanelles and the attack on Fort Dardanos on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 1915. For a brief period she was detached for operations against the forts at Smyrna – now İzmir, Turkey – and returned to the Dardanelles on the 9<sup>th</sup> March. She participated in the main attack on the narrows forts on the 8<sup>th</sup> March and bombarded Turkish trenches at Achi Baba on the 15<sup>th</sup> April. Three days later one of her picket boats torpedoed and sank the British submarine E15 which had run aground and was in danger of being captured by Turkish forces.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> April, HMS Triumph supported the landing of Anzac troops at Gabe Tepe. Whilst she was underway off Gabe Tepe on the 25<sup>th</sup> May she was struck on the starboard side by a torpedo fired from the German submarine U-21 commanded by Kapitänleutnant Otto Herring (1885-1960). As HMS Triumph began to list the destroyer HMS Chelmer evacuated the majority of the crew before she capsized and later sank. Three officers and seventy-five ratings lost their lives.

### HMS Venerable

HMS Venerable was one of three London-class pre-dreadnought battleships. Her technical details were as follows:-

Builder ~ Chatham Dockyard;

Laid Down ~ 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 1899; Launched 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1899; Completed November 1902;

Displacement ~ 14,500-tons (normal); 15,700-tons (full load);

Dimensions ~ Length Overall 431-ft 9-inches; Length at Waterline 411-ft; Beam 75-ft; Maximum Draught 29-ft;

Propulsion ~ 2 x Triple-Expansion Steam Engines; 2 x Shafts;

Installed Power ~ 20 x Belleville Water-tube Boilers; Steam Pressure at Boilers 300lb/Sq-in; Steam Pressure At Engines 250lb/Sq-in; Designed 15,000 IHP; Speed 18-Knots;

Coal Capacity ~ Coal Normal 900-tons; Coal Maximum 2,100-tons;

Coal Consumption ~ 8½-tons at 15-Knots; 11¾-tons at 18-Knots;

Armament ~ 4 x BL 12-inch Mk IX Guns; 12 x BL 6-inch Mk VII Guns; 16 x QF 12-Pounder Guns; 6 x 3-Pounder QF Guns; 4 x 18-inch Torpedo Tubes (Submerged);

Armour (Krupp) ~ 9-inch Belt 15-ft Wide x 300-ft Long From Bow; Bulkheads 9-inch to 12-inch; Barbettes 12-inch; Turrets 8-inch to 10-inch; Casemates 6-inch; Conning Tower 14-inch; Deck 3-inch;

Complement ~ 750; As Flagship 789;

Building Costs ~ £1,000,000/Ship;

The other two warships of the London-class were HMS London and HMS Bulwark sunk by an internal explosion in November 1914.

HMS Venerable was commissioned at Chatham on the 12<sup>th</sup> November, 1902 for service as Second Flagship Rear-Admiral Mediterranean Fleet. During her service there she ran aground outside Algiers harbour, sustaining hull damage and underwent a refit and repairs at Malta in 1906-1907. In August 1907 she was relieved as flagship and returned to Chatham where she was paid off. Re-commissioned the following year she was assigned to the Channel Fleet. At the beginning of 1909 she underwent an extensive refit and on completion was re-commissioned in October 1909 for service with the Atlantic Fleet. In May 1912 she was transferred to the Second Home Fleet at the Nore and placed in commissioned reserve as part of the 5<sup>th</sup> Battle Squadron. At the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914, the 5<sup>th</sup> Battle Squadron was assigned to the Channel Fleet and based at Portland. Fully commissioned HMS Venerable patrolled the English Channel and covered the transportation of the Portsmouth Marine Battalion to Ostend on the 25<sup>th</sup> August, 1914. She was attached to the Dover Patrol and bombarded German positions along the Belgian coast during the German attack on Belgian defences in the Battle of the Yser (16<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> October 1914).

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> November she was detached to support East Coast patrols during the German raid on Great Yarmouth but did not engage in action with enemy ships. The 5<sup>th</sup> Battle Squadron was transferred from Portland to Sheerness on the 14<sup>th</sup> November to guard against a possible German invasion of the United Kingdom. The squadron returned to Portland at the end of December 1914. In March 1915 in company with other warships they bombarded German positions near Westende, Belgium to divert enemy attention during the British attack at Neuve Chapelle. In May she was tasked to try and suppress German shelling of Dunkirk, but counter-battery fire negated HMS Venerable from anchoring or achieving any success.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> May, 1915 HMS Venerable was sent to the Dardanelles to replace the battleship HMS Queen Elizabeth and in August supported the attack on Turkish positions at Suvla Bay. During October she underwent a refit at Gibraltar and on completion transferred to the Adriatic

to reinforce the Italian Navy against Austro-Hungarian Navy until the beginning of December 1916. She returned to the United Kingdom in mid-December and was laid up at Portsmouth. In February and March 1918 she was refitted as a depot ship and sent to Portland to serve as a depot ship for mine-laying trawlers. She was attached to the Northern Patrol in August 1918 and then with the Southern Patrol from September to December. HMS Venerable was paid off into care and maintenance at Portland and placed on the disposal list at Portland in May 1919 and sold for scrap in June 1920. Resold on two occasions she was finally broken up in 1922.

### HMS Research

HMS Research was launched on the 4<sup>th</sup> December 1888 at Chatham Dockyard. She displaced 520-tons, was 155-ft in length, had a beam of 24-ft and armed with a 6-pounder gun. Powered by a 450 HP steam engine driving paddles which was unusual at the time but it gave greater manoeuvrability. She was employed between 1889 and 1912 on surveying coastal waters around the United Kingdom. Her surveying duties were undertaken between April and October. During the winter months from November to March HMS Research was laid up at Portsmouth. In 1915 she was stationed at Portland as depot ship for locally armed trawlers. She remained at Portland until paid off in August 1919 and scrapped the following year.

Leading Stoker Denis Driscoll's service details record that the last ship he served on for just over one month was HMS Research. It is reasonable to assume that as his previous ship was HMS Venerable, which was under care and maintenance at Portland he probably continued, as it was more convenient, to use her facilities and sleep aboard her at night. It was on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 1919 after completing over twenty-two years in the Royal Navy that he was found dead in his hammock having died of natural causes. He was 43 years of age.

Southern Times ~ Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> May, 1919.

### Inquest On Two Sailors ~ One Drowned The Other Found Dead In His Hammock

The South Dorset Coroner (Mr G.P. Symes) held two inquires at the R.N. Hospital on Monday morning. The first concerned William James Adams, 1<sup>st</sup> Class stoker R.N.R., of H.M.S. Implacable, a native of Runcorn, Cheshire. Deceased, who was 27 years of age, had been missing from his ship since March 25<sup>th</sup>. Mr W.T. Wilkinson (Admiralty Law Agent) was present at the inquiry.

Thomas Godden, chief gunner H.M.S. Implacable, produced deceased's certificates. He communicated with the man's home in Cheshire after he was missing, but nothing was known there. Joseph Elliot, coxswain of the Government steam launch Scout, said he found the body at

5.20 p.m. the previous Thursday, floating at the entrance to the Camber. Edward Hems, leading stoker, H.M.S. Implacable, giving evidence of identification said that on the left forearm there were tattoo marks and a dagger. Adams had been missing since March 25<sup>th</sup>. On that date deceased went ashore on leave and should have returned at 10.30 p.m. A verdict of "Found Drowned" was returned.

The second inquest was on Dennis [sic Denis] Driscoll, leading stoker, H.M.S. Venerable a single man who was found dead in his hammock early on Saturday morning. George William Abner Fisher, stoker 1<sup>st</sup> class, H.M.S. Venerable gave evidence of identification. Deceased was 43. He had known him about nine months. The man had complained of pains in his head and had been in hospital several times. He last saw him at 12 o'clock midnight on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. He went to wake him up at four o'clock and found him dead in his hammock.

Thomas Jarvis Brunton, stoker petty officer, said deceased was lying in his hammock on his right side. He was a very steady man. Surgeon Lieutenant Firman Edwards, H.M.S. Implacable, said he was called to see the deceased at 5 a.m., and found him lying on a blanket beneath his bunk. There was nothing to show cause of death, and the only marks on the body were two superficial injuries to the nose. He held a post mortem examination and found the right lung was affected with tuberculosis and on opening the skull he found haemorrhage at the base of the brain, but it was due to arterial degeneration and not to injury. The cause of death was cerebral haemorrhage.

A verdict was returned in accordance with the medical testimony.

Denis Driscoll's body was claimed by his relatives and taken back to Ireland. He was buried in Abbeymahon Old Graveyard on the north side of the Timolegue-Courtmacsherry road to the south of Cork. The graveyard contains the ruins of an ancient abbey.

Denis had nominated his brother Mr William Driscoll, of Burrin South, Kilbrittain, County Cork as his next-of-kin. He received Denis's 1914-15 Star, British War Medal 1914-1920, Allied Victory Medal 1914-1919, Bronze Memorial Plaque and Scroll. Mr Driscoll also received his brother's war gratuity payment and made a claim for a Dependents Pension, but there is no indication as to whether he was successful.

+++

## Sources

Dictionary Of Disasters At Sea During The Age Of Steam Including Sailing Ships & Ships Of War Lost In Action 1824 – 1962 by Charles Hocking F.L.A. First published by The Lloyds Register of Shipping in 1969. Re-published in 1989 by The London Stamp Exchange, 5 Buckingham Street, London WC2N 6BS. ISBN 0 9481 30 72 5

Jane's Fighting Ships of World War I. First published by Jane's Publishing Company in 1919. Re-published in 1990 by Studio Editions Limited, Princess House, 50 Eastcastle Street, London W1N 7AP. ISBN 1 85170 378 0

Southern Times ~ Saturday, 10<sup>th</sup> May, 1919.

National Archives ~ ADM 188/453/283113 – Service Record Leading Stoker Denis Driscoll  
Royal Navy

Ancestry Web-Site ~ [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)

Commonwealth War Graves Commission Web-Site ~ [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org)

Clyde Ships Web-Site ~ [www.clydeships.co](http://www.clydeships.co)

U-Boat Website ~ [www.uboat.net](http://www.uboat.net)

Wikipedia Web-Site ~ [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com)

UK, Naval Medal & Award Roll 1793-1972 ~ [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)

Dependants Pension Records ~ [www.westernfrontassociation.com/ancestry](http://www.westernfrontassociation.com/ancestry)

Photographs ~ ©Roger Coleman

Roger Coleman